

## [The Ghost Town of Auburn]

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Beliefs and Customs - sketch of a "ghost - town"

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Form [md] 3

Folklore Collection (or Type)

## Library of Congress

Title The ghost town of Auburn

Place of origin Oregon Date 2/24/39

Project worker Manly M. Banister

Project editor

Remarks

Form A

Circumstances of Interview

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Manly M. Banister Date February 24. 1939

Address 2071 S.W. Park Avenue

Subject The Ghost Town of Auburn.

Name and address of informant Mrs. J. N. Doane

Date and time of interview February 23 — afternoon.

Place of interview 2825 N. E. 35th Avenue

Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant

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Project files — Elks Building

Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you None.

Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. The house is a moderate dwelling in the neighborhood of Grant High School. The interior plainly and simply furnished.

Form B

Personal History of Informant

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Manly M. Banister Date February 24, 1939

Address 2071 S. W. Park Avenue

Subject The Ghost Town of Auburn

Name and address of informant Mrs. J. N. Doane

2825 N. E. 35th Avenue

Information obtained should supply the following facts:

1. Ancestry
2. Place and date of birth
3. Family

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4. Places lived in, with dates
5. Education, with dates
6. Occupations and accomplishments with dates
7. Special skills and interests
8. Community and religious activities
9. Description of informant
10. Other points gained in interview

None is available except for what already is in the office. Mrs. Doane absolutely refused to divulge any facts of her own life, declaring that she would not be mentioned because she never lived in Auburn, but about eight miles from it. She offered some esoteric reason to the effect that people would read this stuff and know that she did not live in Auburn and they wouldn't believe any of it then. It all sounded very difficult and confusing. The material we have concerning her she declares to be false. She said that a woman interviewed her the last time, promising not to use any of the facts she gave her about herself, but these were filed, and now Mrs. Doane claims they are distorted, and it is very displeasing to her.

Form C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

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Name of worker Manly M. Banister Date February 24, 1939

Address 2071 S. W. Park Avenue

Subject The Ghost Town of Auburn.

Name and address of informant Mrs. J. N. Doane

2825 N. E. 35th Avenue

Text:

I don't know why you people come to me to find out about Auburn because I never lived there. I lived about eight miles from town, over by way of Sumpter. Of course, I was in Auburn a number of times, but I never lived there, so anything I could tell you wouldn't be worth much. I'll tell you who you ought to see and that is W. S. Hughes. He is street commissioner in Baker, Oregon, and you could get hold of him there by writing him a letter.

Maybe I can tell you a little bit, I don't know what. Mining was all there was in those days, you know. There were no pastimes to speak of, because everybody had to work. There were several families lived there and they went visiting each over on Sundays. Dancing was the only recreation we had. We danced the popular dances of that time. The parents all went and took their children. I remember the first time I ever danced. I was just eleven years old at the time — but don't you put that in there, I wouldn't want anybody to know that. They danced all night in those days, and at midnight every one stopped for the midnight lunch which was really the main attraction. There was a big log house in Auburn where we used to dance, and I think it is there yet. It had a big, open floor upstairs, and there were people living in the downstairs. We would dance upstairs until midnight, then we would all go down stairs for lunch in these people's place.

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Everybody was friendly in those days. If anyone was sick, there was always somebody would go and sit up with them, or if somebody died, all the people would go and help prepare for the burial. It was what they called "paying their respects." I remember one family that had typhoid fever, and the people all got together to help them out. They got food and clothing and things like that and took it over to them.

There was very little crime. People left their doors unlocked and never had a thought that any one would steal from them. Now I don't know whether you have ever seen a miner's cabin or not, but they were built with a lean-to, a little kind of shed with a slanting roof, either in front or in back, and in this lean-to the miner cached all his supplies and his wood and stuff like that. They would leave the doors of the cabin unlocked and the lean-to piled full of wood and food and other things like that, and go away sometimes for the whole winter. All they asked was that things be left as whoever came along found them. Anyone that passed that way was welcome to use the owner's cabin and his wood and things while he was gone, as long as they replaced everything,

There weren't many celebrations in those days. About three or four times a year, I guess was all. There was Washington's Birthday, the Fourth of July, Christmas, and New Years. Those were the times when the big dances were held, and I guess that was about all because everybody had to work too hard to get together often. Sometimes small groups gathered and played cards like Casino, euchre, and other games of that sort.

Almost everything people used was shipped in. They even raised very 3 little stuff at first because they didn't know they could. Almost everything had to be hauled in from Umatilla Landing. Sugar came in 100 pound barrels. People had their own beef, and they made their own butter. In later years they found out that the ground would really produce, and they began to raise vegetables. That was when I was a girl.

They didn't have as many vegetables, either, it seems like in those days. There were cabbages, apples, potatoes, onions, and beets and that was about all. No carrots or other

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vegetables like people have now. I don't know why not. Oh yes, there were dry beans, too, and a little canned stuff, but not nearly so much as they have nowadays. There was no such thing then as canned milk. People bought lots of molasses and pickles in five and ten gallon kegs. When they got vegetables, they got them in large lots and buried them in what were called root-houses. These were dug underground, except for the roof which was like a mound just at ground level. It was cool and dark in the root-houses and vegetables would keep a long time. Another food we had was oyster soup. Everybody was very fond of oysters, and usually it was the main dish at parties and dances when they had the midnight supper.

The had to buy material and make their am clothes, but the men bought theirs already made. All they wore was overalls and a shirt and leather boots. Heavy mackinaws and coats of that kind were the style. There was no such thing hardly as dressing up. All shirts came with just a neckband and no collar. The men more paper collars. They could wear them a time or two then throw them away because they were so cheap. There was no way at hand in that place to launder collars. The men never heard of such a thing as pressing their pants. Later they took to wearing celluloid collars and cravats, and these were more of a blind than anything else. The cravets were very wide, 4 and with just one of those and a collar on, a man didn't need to wear a shirt and seldom did. Of course, they wore a coat, and the cravat covered the front of them so you couldn't tell whether they had a shirt on or not. The men wore leather boots for dress, when they come to parties and such-like, and they were usually a newer pair of the same kind they marked in. They used these for dress until the old ones wore out, then they would work in the newer ones and buy still another pair for dress.

There was very little singing in those days. We had no radios or phonographs or anything like that. My family owned the first organ in that part of the country, and for the dances they usually had a couple of fiddles; first and second fiddle they were called. When we did sing, we sang the songs of the times. I can remember one was "Grandfather's Clock," and

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then there was "When You and I Were Young, Maggie," and "Silver Threads Among the Gold."

Criminals were shunned in those days, and mostly everybody was honest. They had the saying then that a man's word was as good as his bond. There was a tree near town which I often saw when I was a girl. A man had been lynched there once, but I don't know as I ever know what for. It was just local curiosity, and everybody pointed it out as a tree on which a man had once been hanged.

Speaking of clothes again, young men in later years began to wear silk scarfs and they pinned these with gold pins made out of curious nuggets they had found. That was quite a popular thing in those days.

Mrs. Dorcas Bromn can't tell you anything about Auburn, either because she never lived there. Oh yes, she knows about the stage robbery, all right. Her address is:

2670 S.W. Beula Vista (King's Heights)

Beacon 9068

Form D

Extra Comment

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Manley M. Banister Date February 24,1939

Address 2071 S.W. Park



## Library of Congress

Subject The Ghost Town of Auburn

Name and address of informant Mrs. J. N. Doane

2825 N. W. 35th Ave.

Comment:

Mrs. Doane steadfastly insisted that she knew nothing because she had lived eight miles from Auburn instead of in it. I was using the data of a former interview with which to guide my questioning, and the questions were so curious to her that she asked to see the sheet. She read it and became very displeased, and refused to give it back, saying that none of it was true and that she wanted nothing like that in our files. I let her keep the sheet, since we have the original in the files. However, based upon her insistence that it bears distorted evidence, it must be valueless.